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THE WAR

IMPRESSIONS AND REFLECTIONS
BEING THOUGHTS ON ITS RELIGIOUS
ASPECTS

BY

C. R. BALL, M.A.

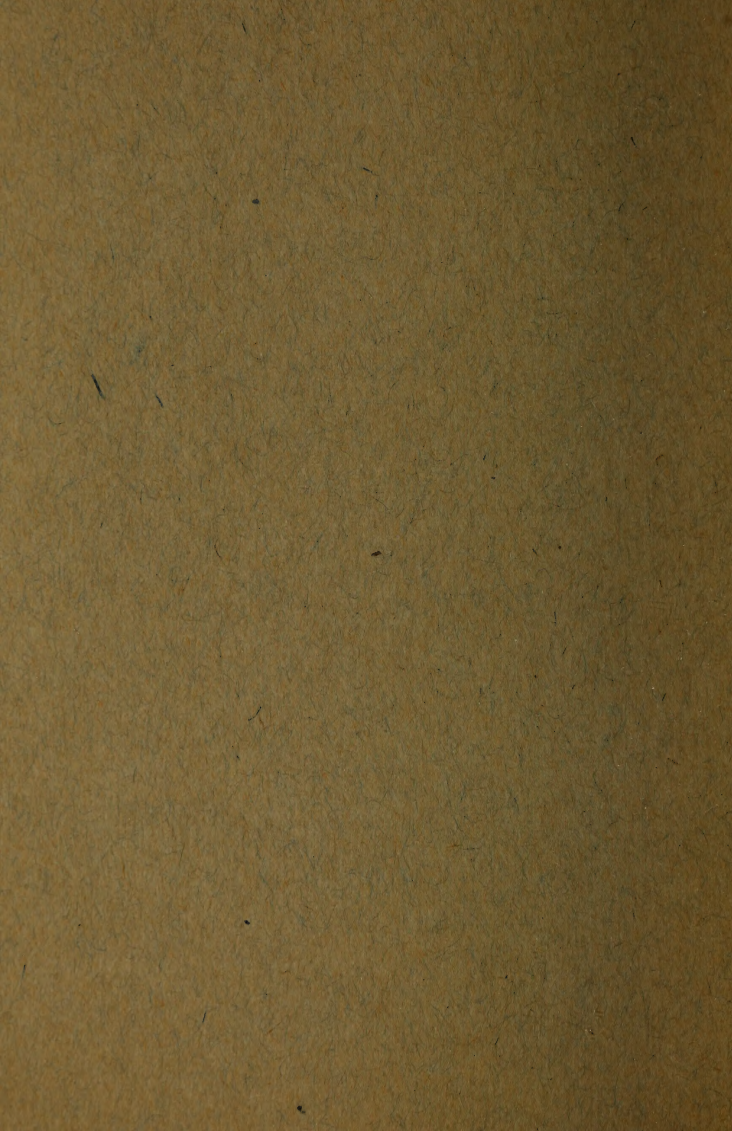
HON. CANON OF PETERBOROUGH

LONDON

SOCIETY FOR PROMOTING CHRISTIAN KNOWLEDGE
NORTHUMBERLAND AVENUE, W.C.



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PREFACE

THE following series of reflections on some of the more spiritual aspects of the present War are addressed to those who, with aching hearts and bewildered minds, with rising and falling hopes, have followed the varying fortunes of our own soldiers, and of our allies, and who have also felt the urgency of the religious appeal that this national emergency has forced upon us.

At different stages of the War this appeal has been brought home to us in special ways. First, there was the time of uncertainty, when it seemed possible that England would stand aloof from the conflict and remain neutral, that she would refuse to recognise her obligations to her friends and informal allies.

In the autumn came the harvest, and with it a deepened sense of thankfulness, not only for the bounteous harvest given to us, but also for the security afforded us for the future, by our continued command of the sea.

Moreover, throughout the whole course of the War, with its varying fortunes, the obligations and consolations of religion have been made real and practical to us, by the continued services of Prayer and Intercession, in which it has been our privilege to join.

It has been the aim of the writer of the following pages to recall to the minds of their readers these consecutive stages in the course of the War.

PETERBOROUGH,

All Souls' Day, 1914.

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I

WAR AND RUMOURS OF WAR

THE CONFIDENCE OF FAITH

LOOKING back upon the eventful months since the outbreak of the War, we must have been often struck with the extreme appropriateness of some verses in the Psalms and Lessons appointed for the Sunday services in the current events of the day.

Thus, on the Sunday succeeding the declaration of war, the Psalms for the Morning Service contained the suggestive words, "Lo, the ungodly bend their bow and make ready their arrows within the quiver . . . for the foundations will be cast down, and what hath the righteous done?"

Though the general meaning of the Psalmist's words is clear enough, it becomes clearer and more appropriate if we combine certain various renderings of the passage which have been suggested, and read the sentence as follows:—

"When the foundations are destroyed, when the

pillars are thrown down, when the buttresses are torn away: what can the righteous, what can the righteous man do?"

What the circumstances were that occasioned the despondent enquiry of the writer of the Psalm we do not know.

But that circumstances might easily arise that would have abundantly justified this unknown Israelite's enquiry, and justify also a similar question for ourselves at this time, the alarming conditions of European affairs at the present moment only too clearly show.

At any rate, the words as recorded may well suggest an enquiry as to what are the foundations of human society, what are the pillars that support the social fabric, what are the buttresses that give additional strength to the whole structure?

What, then, are the essential foundations of human society, organised on a Christian basis?

There can surely be no question that the primary foundation principle upon which Human Society rests is the principle which is known as "Solidarity," a law of a common life, of common interests, or, as it has been well described as "a partnership in gain or loss, in honour and dishonour"; a law of unity and fellowship, by which if one member suffer, all the members suffer with it; if one member be honoured, all the members are sharers of the honour.

This great principle of solidarity may be expressed

in more simple fashion as the law of Brotherhood, but then it must be remembered that this Brotherhood cannot stand alone, it must carry with it the recognition of God, and of His righteous judgment, of His rule and providence in human affairs, must carry with it the recognition of God as the Centre both of the national and of the individual life.

What was the first murder, what is the latest war, but the emphatic repudiation of this Law, which found expression in Cain's insolent question, "Am I my brother's keeper?"

Again, what are the pillars that support the superstructure of Human Society, based upon the law of Brotherhood under a Divine Brother, and a heavenly Father?

They are the massive stately pillars of Law, of even-handed justice, and ordered liberty; they are the clustered columns of kindness and pity, which together combine to give security of life, of property and character, together with some security of opportunity by which each man shall have room to develop the powers and faculties with which his Maker has endowed him.

And what, again, are the buttresses of society, secondary institutions added to give strength and stability to the social order?

First and foremost of these buttresses is education, education based upon the Christian religion, and upon common sense. Such, again, are an efficient system of police, and—until the nations of the world become

wise enough to see that the arbitrament of war is the most costly of all methods, costly not only or chiefly in money, but costly far more in human life, in desolated homes, and trampled cornfields—an adequate army.

But here it is that we are met by the law of solidarity. We are concerned not only with the foundations, the pillars, and the buttresses of our own national life ; we cannot limit our obligations, our responsibilities to our own nation, or even to the sister states of our wide empire ; we have also to do with a wider community, we belong to what ought to be, and please God will be some day, a Family of nations.

Nations in the present day cannot be shut up in water-tight compartments. No nation can live unto itself, or die unto itself. War is a calamity which cannot be restricted to the power that provokes it, nor to the power which it is sought to crush : War is a universal calamity, as Peace is a universal blessing.

It is impossible for us to dissociate ourselves from international complications ; they affect us whether we like it or not.

Most striking is the fact that the very first serious rumour of war, throws a shadow upon every capital city of the world, raises at once the price of food, strikes the Stock Exchanges of the world with panic, brings about a state of things in which rich men become suddenly poor, and poor men find themselves poorer still.

If the War that broke out four months ago in

Eastern Europe could have been localised, it would have been a terrible business for those immediately concerned, but since, as was only too likely from the first, other nations have been drawn in, and as the War-storm has burst with all its fury upon both Western and Eastern Europe, who will venture to predict its various issues ?

If we then flattered ourselves that by reason of our insular position we lay beyond the reach of war, we have been bitterly undeceived.

We soon felt that we could not stand alone : that we stood in close relation to others, and still more closely to friendly powers. We felt that their danger was ours, as our danger would be theirs ; we felt that if we would not be forsaken in our own day of supreme need, we must at all costs remain faithful to our engagements.

It was brought home to us that, national life, national existence, national defence were not our own exclusive possession ; that they were reciprocal, and must include the life, the existence and the defence of others.

Nor could we lay the flattering unction to our souls that the War would continue to have its scene of action in the East. We soon saw it transferred to the West, and the waters of the Adriatic exchanged for the waters of the English Channel and the North Sea.

And with what results ? Who could have told *then* ? Who can tell *now* ?

Yet it does not require any very great power of imagination to picture to ourselves what would be the inevitable result if we had to see the collapse of our naval power in the home waters, and the loss of naval power on the trade routes even for a few weeks ; or to forecast the effect of a successful foreign invasion or raid, resulting in the imposition of a War-indemnity counted by hundreds of millions sterling !

Would not any one of these events be sufficient to shake, even if it did not overthrow, for a time at least, the very foundations of our national and social life ; might it not seriously threaten the pillars of the social edifice, and bring about the partial, if not complete, collapse of its buttresses ?

And if it should, as it may, come to this ; if the foundations are destroyed, if the pillars are thrown down, if the buttresses are torn away, then the Psalmist's question will have to be asked, and will have to be answered, " What shall the righteous, what shall the righteous man do ? " or, what is more to the purpose, what can the righteous, what can the righteous man do to prevent such catastrophes as these ? For, by God's infinite mercy, none of these calamities have come upon us yet.

The time has indeed passed for military preparations on a large and adequate scale at home, though much has been done and well done, and our strong and efficient navy is still intact, and equal, we believe, to any emergency ; but still we must do what we

can ; in every possible way we ought to support our Government and our military authorities ; and, at any rate, we can strive to maintain a calm and equable mind, and resist, both in ourselves and in others, anything approaching to panic, putting our whole trust in God, leaving it to Him to bless and prosper our cause, which we feel to be a righteous cause, and a just.

But if our hopes be not wholly fulfilled, if unexpected events happen, if unforeseen dangers have to be faced, if the pillars of our steadfast hope be shaken, and the buttresses of our faith show signs of giving way, if the very foundations on which our national security rests tremble, what is the righteous man, the man who honestly desires to be right, and to do right, what is he to do ?

He must do this : he must look to the condition of the defences of his own personal life ; he must make sure that his own house, the house of his own faith and hope, is built upon the rock, upon a firm and solid foundation, that, when the rain descends, and the floods come, and the winds blow and beat upon it, it may stand firm, firm because founded upon a rock.

II

THE DEADLY WATERS HEALED WITH CHRISTIAN SALT

THE incident to which reference is made in what follows, and the significant action of the Prophet Elisha which it included, marks a new beginning, a new departure in the history of God's dealings with Israel.

Elijah, his master, had just been parted from him, and taken up by a whirlwind into heaven. The old era of the earthquake, the storm and the fire was over ; the new era of the " still small voice " was just beginning. The ministry of destruction was giving place to a ministry of healing.

It was at Jericho that the sign of this new era was given.

Jericho, " the City of Palm trees," was a notable place, famous in the past history of Israel. It enjoyed every advantage of situation and climate ; but it had one serious defect, one notable drawback, the stream flowing from its principal fountain was unwholesome and spread death and barrenness wherever it reached.

The Elders of Jericho called the Prophet's attention to this serious blot upon their city's prosperity

and reputation. "Behold, we pray thee," they said, "the situation of this city is pleasant as my Lord seeth, but the water is naught and the ground barren."

And is not this the case also with Christ's visible Church upon earth, the City of God? It is indeed a notable city, a city with a long and glorious history, a city pleasant in situation and, like Zion of old, "the joy of the whole earth."

Through this city of God, indeed, flows the river of the water of life, which makes glad her streets; but there flow also, sad to say, other and pestilential streams, which have forced an entrance, and spread barrenness and death, sorrow and suffering wherever they flow, poisoning the very life of its people.

Such a stream, carrying death and desolation, destruction and misery, wherever it goes, is the War now running its fatal course through Europe.

Now in what way was it that the fountain of the deadly waters of Jericho was healed?

The Prophet of God, we are told, went forth unto the spring of the waters, and cast in a cruse of salt, with the words—"Thus saith the Lord, I have healed these waters, there shall not be from thence death or barren land."

May not this highly significant story be taken as indicating the true method by which the deadly stream of war may be healed?

What is this salt that, being cast into these poisoned waters, is to heal them?

May we not say that it is the Gospel of Jesus Christ, the Gospel not so much as an abstract belief, not so much as a Divine philosophy, though it is both of these, as the Gospel manifested in the hearts and lives of faithful Christians, and embodied in the corporate life of the Church?

The healing of a nation's life must come not from the many working inwards, but from the few working outwards; it must come from the few, from a minority, from a comparatively few true, noble, fearless souls such as our Lord describes as "the salt of the earth."

It is always so, the supreme need of the State is a nucleus of strong and good men and women; the supreme need, the one security of the Church is the possession of saints, of Christians worthy of the name.

But it must be remembered also, that the grains of salt which were cast into the fountain-head of the Jericho spring were collected together in a new cruse; and so also the salt of the earth, the scattered saints, can only make their full power felt when they are collected together in a body, in a community; in other words, the only true and permanent source of life and health and blessing to the world is the real, living, working, praying Church of God.

But what are we to say of *salt* being the chosen medium by which the waters of Jericho were healed; and how is it applicable to the religion of our Lord

Jesus Christ which is to heal the streams of evil that poison its life, war among the rest ?

Well, salt is the accepted symbol of a purifying, preserving energy, but more than this, it represents an agency which is sharp, pungent, and penetrating in its action.

It is a figure often used in the New Testament—"Have salt in yourselves," said our Lord, and "be at peace one with another." "Let your speech," wrote St. Paul to the Colossians, "be always with grace seasoned with salt."

It is a figure of the new life which the Incarnate Son of God brought into the world, of that New Force which He has introduced into human life, the power of Love and Faith and Hope. It is a figure of the penetrating, pungent energy of Truth, of that Word of God which is "living and active, sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing of soul and spirit." It sets forth the penetrating, healing energy of self-discipline, and self-control. It represents the hidden power which moulds the character and produces saints, not necessarily saints of the cell or the cloister, but strong men and brave, good men and true ; good and noble women, tender, loving, sympathising, strong in the strength of self-sacrifice, strong in the power of love !

What is really needed for the cure of all our social evils, and of this particular evil, the evil of War, or rather the evil of the war spirit ; what is really the only practical and permanent remedy is to introduce

into the stream of human life some healing principle, some quickening impulse which, like the leaven of our Saviour's parable, will work its way into men's hearts and consciences and bring about a change of mind, and with it a change of action, which will eventually bring home to them the superiority of the spiritual over the material, of the unseen over the visible, of the eternal over the temporal.

But here comes in a question which affects us very nearly, which we ought most seriously to lay to heart.

If Christianity as a living, acting, vivifying, healing principle is to heal our social evils, and War among them, what if our very religion should have lost its salt, and become vapid, tasteless, powerless? Of what avail would it be to cast the salt of Christianity into the poisoned waters of human life, if that salt has lost its saltiness, lost its pungency, lost its penetrative, stimulative power?

Of this we may be quite sure, that a religion that has lost its salt will never heal the unwholesome waters of human life, will never make it the noble, beautiful thing which it is capable of being, and which God intended it to be.

If war is ever to be brought to an end, it will be brought about by the imperceptible leavening of human thought, by the growing enlightenment of the national conscience.

But in the meanwhile, the existence of such a war

as this which is now raging, should have a present application to our own manner of life.

The Apostle, remember, bids us endure hardness as good soldiers of Jesus Christ, whereas we, on the contrary, are too much inclined to go in for a general softness.

In a time of strain and stress like this, when the lives of the young manhood of our country are being poured forth upon the battlefield in this terrible but most righteous struggle, we ought to cultivate a disciplined mind, and an earnest purpose, and brace ourselves up to endure hardness, to put ourselves, so to speak, on a war footing, to aim at greater strictness and simplicity of living, to show ourselves ready to take our share in bearing the common burden; and in all ways to assist the government to carry our country through this epoch-making crisis.

Only then let us see to it that our salt does not lose its savour; that our religion does not lose its power; only let us take care that our own personal religion does not become flabby, invertebrate, inoperative, a religion which can work no deliverance on earth for ourselves or for anybody else.

But if our religion is true and real, if it has got something about it of the savour and pungency of salt, then we may hope that the waters of our national, social, family and personal life may be healed, be made sweet and wholesome and freed from the curse and burden of war, and from many another burden and curse.

Then will the Divine Head of humanity, the Lord of Life, the Lord of Health, the Prince of Peace, our risen and glorified Lord be able to say—"I have healed these waters ; there shall be from thence neither death nor barrenness."

III

THE WAR-CLOUD AND THE VISION OF HOPE

THE continual contemplation of the horrors of war, of suffering and death, of sorrow and loss, needs some alleviation ; there is danger of our becoming war-obsessed, sorrow-stricken ; we need to be reminded that there is another side even to the horrors of war, that the suffering that is constantly being forced upon our attention does not end in suffering, that it is through the cross of pain that the crown of glory is won, that out of death comes life, out of heaviness comes joy.

God's glory, the glory of the Son of God, has been manifested in many ways ; but it stands out in its full glory, shines forth in its full splendour, when it is seen against the dark background of sin and suffering, of pain and loss, of sickness and death.

God is Light, but His brightness is most conspicuous when seen against the darkness of human error and human sin.

It was in His Passion, in His atoning death upon the Cross, that the glory of Christ was supremely manifested ; it was in His entire submission, and perfect obedience—obedience even unto death—that the Father was glorified in His Son. As St. Bernard

says, it was not so much our Lord's death as the willing obedience that caused that death, that was so supremely pleasing to God.

It was that bitter agony in the garden, that final agony on the Cross, that manifested the supreme glory of the Son of God, in which the Father was glorified in the Son.

And as it has been with the Divine Head, so also has it been with the Church and with the Church's individual members.

The Church too and its members have their own special glory, but that glory is not their own, it is the glory of the Head manifested in His members, it is the glory of the indwelling Christ. It is called to be "a glorious Church, holy and without blemish."

But this glory, this spotless purity, has been attained through suffering and pain, it has been won through sacrifice; through fellowship with the sufferings of Christ; the white robes of the saints are said by a daring paradox to have been made white with blood, even "the blood of the Lamb."

When in her age-long history has the Church of Christ most nearly approached her true Ideal, been most conformed to the likeness of her Head?

When did the glory of the saints, the glory of faith and patience shine forth most brightly, most clearly? Was it not in the fiery days of "the Great Tribulation"?

Or again, when has it been that the true glory of man, the glory of the Christ in man has been

most clearly manifested in the lives of Christians, when have they approached most nearly to their Divine Exemplar, been most conscious of His Presence, most zealous in His Service ?

Has it not been, more often than not, when they have been passing through a period of strain and stress, when they have been subjected to grievous temptation, when they have experienced suffering and loss, anxiety and perplexity ?

To go no further than the limits of our own experience, have not the facts of life as we ourselves have experienced them, led us to the conclusion that in the words of a recent writer—" Loss and suffering have a power which success and prosperity miss, a power to strengthen and refine the character; that the noblest work is done by sufferers and through suffering, that pain is the condition of all true progress, that it is our own heritage of pain that unites us to our fellows, that comradeship in suffering draws men and women together closer than any other tie" ? Or, to quote the striking words of another writer—" The pleasures of each generation evaporate in air, it is their pains that increase the spiritual momentum of the world."

And is not this true of ourselves to-day ?

We have been passing through a period of distress and anxiety such as neither we nor our fathers have known, a period which our Lord's own words foretell: " Upon the earth distress of nations with perplexity, men's hearts failing them for fear."

But terrible as are the accounts which we read every day, has not the whole situation had the effect of rousing our people from apathy and carelessness, has it not called out all that was best in our national character? Have we not seen our countrymen with one consent devoting themselves to their country's service, whether as soldiers fighting in the front, or as organizing willing volunteers at home for foreign service, or forming Ambulance Corps for the care and treatment of the wounded, or providing for the relief of our soldiers' wives and children or for the succour of the homeless fugitives landed in our midst? Have we not seen them one and all facing the complicated situation calmly and fearlessly?

Have we not seen how in a moment, the breaking out of war and the call to service which followed it dissipated the storm-clouds which threatened to break in the dire perils of civil war?

Have we not seen the wonderful sight of our sister nations beyond the sea sending their sons, at the call of their king, to fight in the common cause of freedom and humanity; of Indian princes volunteering for service and offering their own soldiers to fight in England's battle, to fight for a cause which they know to be the cause of justice and right, of truth and plighted word.

It has called forth also the Tzar's proclamation to the Poles full of hope and promise for that down-trodden people. It has called forth the last touching

message of the dying Pope to his world-wide flock, and the urgent appeal for peace from his successor.

Let us recall to our minds the wonderful words spoken by our Lord when He heard of the sickness of Lazarus: "This sickness is not unto death, but for the glory of God, that the Son of God may be glorified thereby"; and the words spoken afterwards by Him to Martha: "Said I not unto thee, that if thou wouldest believe, thou shouldest see the glory of God?"

Our Lord was looking beyond the outward appearance to the Divine reality; and so may we not now think of Him as standing over against the shock of contending armies, regardless of the sights and sounds of war, and saying in His calm majestic voice: "Know you my people, that this tragedy, this sickness is not unto death, but unto life, and to the glory of God"?

For indeed is not war, and especially such a war as this, a veritable sickness of the nations, an intrusive anomaly in the Divine Order of health, an outrage upon the Fatherhood of God and upon the Brotherhood of man?

And may we not venture to say that it began, to all appearance, in a diseased abnormal lust for dominion and power, that in its subsequent manifestations borders upon insanity, involving as it has done the contemptuous repudiation of right and justice, of truth and honour, and contempt for the rights and liberties of weaker nations?

Do not the blood-soaked battlefields of Belgium and France, and will not the battlefields of Germany also bear their ghastly testimony that this war-sickness is indeed in most fearful reality, a sickness unto death?

But so remember to all appearance was it with the sickness and death of Lazarus. When Jesus at last arrived at Bethany Lazarus was dead and buried; and the sorrowing sisters with one consent breathed in His ear the sad complaint—"Lord, if Thou hadst been here, our brother had not died."

It was at this juncture that our Lord standing before the grave, said to Martha: "Said I not unto thee, that if thou didst believe thou shouldest see the glory of God?"

But these words of His apply to us no less than to Martha. They teach us to look beyond the carnival of death which day by day is presented to our minds, to what we may hope lies beyond it.

For if *we* believe, we too shall see the glory of God, and the glory of the Son of God, the Prince of Peace. Upon our waiting hearts shall dawn the vision, the vision long delayed, the vision of peace.

But we must see to it that this vision of peace shall be a substantial peace. It will not do to give ear too readily to the first whisper of peace, to grasp it too eagerly and prematurely.

We have to think not only of the present, but of the future; we have to think not only of ourselves, but of those also who come after us.

As "the heirs and trustees of freedom," we must not, we dare not run the risk of the repetition of such a war as this, we must make it an impossibility for a generation to come. It is not a question of vengeance, for vengeance belongeth unto God; what we have to do is to ensure a righteous and a lasting peace.

As our own king has taught us—"We are fighting for a worthy purpose, and we shall not lay down our arms until that purpose has been fully achieved."

And when that purpose has been achieved, we may hope that God will grant to us, and to the nations—to our allies, and to those who to-day are arrayed against us, the blessing of peace, a peace which may bind us and them in a true and firm fellowship for the promotion of God's glory, and the good of all mankind.

And when in His great mercy this vision of peace shall be fulfilled to us, then this great utterance of our Lord, in its fullest force, in its widest scope shall find its full accomplishment, so that we shall be able to say: "Yes, after all, this war-sickness was not really unto death, but for the glory of God, and that the Son of God might be glorified thereby."

IV

THE HARVEST FIELD AND THE BATTLE-FIELD.

As in this autumn season we take our walks abroad, or are borne swiftly on our journey, we see on every side the glad tokens of the coming harvest—now the fields of golden corn waving in the breeze, now the reaping-machine advancing slowly through the standing corn, and with monotonous regularity laying it in swathes, ready for the binder's hand, now passing by close-shaven fields stripped of their golden treasure—our hearts cannot fail to be lifted up with glad satisfaction and joyful thankfulness that God has again reserved unto us the appointed weeks of harvest, and provided food for the sons of men.

And seldom indeed have the fruits of the earth been gathered so abundantly, so opportunely as in the present year ; and never surely has the song of Harvest Home been sung under external conditions so momentous, so terrific, so unexampled as those which now prevail across the Channel, where the dread harvest of war is being gathered in, where, under the murderous fire of modern guns, whole companies of brave men are mown down in swathes upon the trampled soil.

The harvest now being gathered in under such conditions as those should bring to us new thoughts, teach us new lessons, call us to new duties, and inspire us with new hopes.

It speaks to us, indeed, of times and seasons, of sunshine and rain, of Providence and Grace ; but it speaks also of persons, of God and His bounty, of man and his needs.

It is by *God's* grace and mercy, by His good Providence, that the weeks of harvest have again been reserved to us. It is for *us* that He has reserved these weeks, for *us* in spite of our carelessness and forgetfulness of Him, in spite of our ingratitude and hardness of heart, for *us* in this time of our need, in this dread time of war and distress of nations, He has reserved the appointed weeks of the harvest, and has given us the fruits of the earth in full measure, in overflowing abundance.

We should endeavour to realise, what this abundant harvest has done for this country in its time of special need, and still more what it would have done for us, if things had been other than they are.

The harvest, remember, was given us before we were assured that we should retain the command of our narrow seas, and of the trade routes by which foreign produce could be brought in safety to our shores.

Think for a moment what it would have been,

what it would have involved, if we had lost, even temporarily, that command, so that no food could have got to us from over the sea, and if, at the same time, our home harvest had failed or proved scanty ; think what this would have meant for ourselves, and for our children !

This shows indeed what cause we have for thankfulness for the past ; but what a warning for the *future* does it give us ! what an imperative reminder it forces on us, the reminder that if we, as a nation, had *not* maintained our sea power, or, having lost it, had *failed* to regain it, then, however bounteous the harvest which God might give us, we should have been reduced to the direst straits.

We may hope and trust, indeed we may pray earnestly, that the unspeakable horrors and scandals of the present war when it has been brought, as it must be brought, to a finish, will have so shocked the conscience of the Christian nations of the world, that not only Peace may be restored, but that *War* itself may be dethroned, or only tolerated as the last security for Peace.

This is indeed “ a consummation devoutly to be wished,” and it will, it must, come some day ; but it may tarry long, and must be waited for, yet it is worth waiting for, praying for, and, if the call comes, worth dying for.

But till it does come, we must not only plough and sow the fields of our own land, and in due season, by God’s grace, gather in the harvest, we must

also, until the Vision of Peace is realised, take such steps as are necessary to secure our shores from invasion, and to secure the free introduction of food from other harvest fields into our home markets.

In the meanwhile let it be remembered that, "reduced to its simplest expression, the war is a struggle between false and true standards of life," that we and our Allies are fighting not so much against a hostile nation, as against a hostile and hateful principle, the principle that personal or national self-interest, or supposed self-interest, is at liberty to over-ride and trample under foot every dictate of truth and honour, of fealty and mercy that may stand in its way. We are not fighting only for ourselves, we are fighting in the interests of Europe, and especially in the interest of the smaller states of Europe, against militarism run wild, militarism gone mad. But what we perhaps have most need to bear in mind at this juncture, as a recent writer on the war has reminded us, "is that the danger of militarism is not limited to Prussia, and that we should gain little, and the world would lose much, if we were to shatter militarism abroad, only to find it enthroned at home."

The circumstances under which the present bountiful harvest has been gathered in, demand our grateful thanks to the Great Giver of all good, impress upon us with added force the lessons of harvest, the lessons of sowing and reaping.

The great moral principle of the harvest is that laid down by St. Paul: "God is not mocked: whatsoever a man soweth that shall he also reap."

Apply this principle to some of the nations engaged in the present war. Take Belgium. What has she sown, what has she reaped, and what *will* she reap? Materially, she has already reaped the ruthless ravaging of her country, the slaughter not only of her soldiers, but, to the eternal shame of the perpetrators, of many of her women and children; she has reaped the desolation not only of her fortified towns, but the humiliation of her defenceless capital, the wanton destruction of one of her most famous cities.

And all this terrible loss, this appalling suffering, she might have escaped; she had only to accept the insolent offer of her invader, and the enemy would have marched unopposed through her territory and done no harm.

But, as we know, and glory in knowing, she rejected the specious offer, she followed the call of duty and fealty, she gave up her sons to the slaughter, her fields, her towns and villages to the spoiler.

And so with our own people. England, too, might have remained neutral, and her gallant sons who have in such fearful numbers shed their blood on the battlefields of Belgium and France, would have been alive and well to-day. But at what a cost! with how terrible a sacrifice! But England indignantly refused the "infamous proposal" made her, and

stood firm and faithful, faithful to the sanctity of treaty obligations, faithful to the call of friendship and honour.

If Belgium had consented to the offer made her, if England had remained neutral, would not both countries, our own especially, have sown in shame and dishonour ; would not both have reaped in ignominy and contempt ? But now, having sown in blood and sweat, in pain and sleepless toil, what will they have reaped ?

They will have reaped the eternal gratitude of the nation who was the primary object of attack, they will have reaped the respectful admiration of the outside world, the affectionate appreciation of their own countrymen ; their names will go down to posterity as men who have fought a new and more glorious Waterloo ; or be remembered with pride as men who died for their country, and for the sacred cause of Liberty.

But there has been a very different sowing, and will be a very different reaping, to which the same principle must be applied. That principle is, as we have seen, that what a man or a nation sows, that must it also reap.

If there has been a seed-sowing of ruthless cruelty and outrage, of a cynical contempt for treaties and solemn engagements, a seed-sowing of the false and hateful worship of brute force and naked might, must there not inevitably, by the working out of moral law, be a terrible reaping, a terrible Harvest,

the Harvest of moral repulsion and condemnation, the Harvest also, it may be, of humiliation and material loss ?

“ That which a man soweth, that must he also reap. God is not mocked.”

It is strangely significant that in a book written by two Alsacian colleagues after the war of 1870, we find such words as these : “ As for the Germans, they will also reap what they have sown. Now they are on a pinnacle, Europe trembles before them. Drunk with their victories, they will not awaken until Europe, tired of their insolence and ambition, rises to bring them to reason ; then they will be forced to see that, if might is sometimes stronger than right, justice is eternal.”

We may safely say that, if the truth taught us by St. Paul, that “ whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap,” is the main *principle* of Harvest ; the truth that our Lord Himself has taught us, that, as *we* reap what others have sown, so also must *we* sow that others may reap—is its main *lesson*, a lesson taught us also by the great Prophet of the Exile, that the Harvest is meant “ to give seed to the sower, as well as bread to the eater.”

Have not we, and our children indeed, reaped what others have sown, have not other men laboured, and have not we entered into their labours ? Is not this true of every department of human life—in the results of applied science, in literature and art, in study and research ? And now in the battlefield, and

on our guarded shores, our soldiers and sailors have laboured for us in blood and sweat, and we have entered into their labours !

Without them *our* harvest fields might have been trodden down, *our* villages ravaged, our own familiar streets and fields choked with the slain. Without them the cathedrals of Peterborough and Lincoln might have shared the fate of Malines and Rheims, and Oxford laid as low as Louvain.

That this is not so, that our Harvest has been safely gathered in, that our Cathedrals still rise stately in our midst, that our seats of learning are unharmed, we owe to others ; other men have laboured, other men have fought and bled, while for us, it is permitted to enter into their labours, to reap where they have sown.

And if we have reaped what others have sown, we also in our turn must sow that others may reap. The advantages which we have inherited we must pass on to others undiminished, and, if possible, increased ; we who have enjoyed full liberty ourselves must be ready to secure liberty to others.

Above all, we must pass on to others the blessings, the privileges, the hopes of our holy religion, and to the utmost possible extent, the resources for service possessed by our national Church.

The Harvest is given that it may provide seed for the sower, and bread for the eater. Let us then eat and be thankful, let us sow with no sparing

hand, that those who come after us may reap the Harvest of our sowing, with the blessed result that he that soweth, and he that reapeth, may rejoice together, rejoice together in the blessed Harvest of a true and lasting peace.

V

THE CALL TO PRAYER AND THE CALL TO SERVICE

NOT the least of the lessons which the present terrible war has brought home to us is that of our dependence upon God, and upon His ever-present, ever-ready help. Not the least of the duties to which it calls us is the duty and the privilege of united prayer. Not the least of the many encouragements that God's Word gives us is the truth that He to Whom we offer our prayers is a God who hears and answers prayer, the truth that prayer is a real, vital, practical spiritual energy.

This emphatic call to prayer has been sounded in the ears of the whole nation by the authorities of the national Church, and by those of other Christian bodies.

It would be difficult, I think, to find a more fitting and suggestive illustration of the duty and the power of intercessory prayer, or more suitable to the special circumstances of the present time, than the incident upon which the following reflections are based.

Fully to enter into its meaning and significance,

it is necessary to remember that the Israelites had only reached their sixth encampment after their passage over the Red Sea, by which their deliverance from Egypt was effected ; for three days they had been without water, and now the supply that they had brought with them was exhausted ; they had suffered, moreover, a grievous disappointment at Marah, where, on their arrival, they found that the water available was so bitter as to be undrinkable ; they had indeed pitched their tents for a while by the clear waters and palm trees of Elim, and were now encamped in the fertile oasis of Rephidim. But here, in spite of the beauty of the scene around them, contrasting so favourably with the arid desert that they had been traversing, they had been guilty of deep-seated unbelief, which found utterance in the defiant demand, " Is the Lord amongst us or not ? " And then it was that, as we read, " Amalek came and fought with Israel at Rephidim."

The Israelites, we must remember, were totally unused to war. Faint and weary, they were trudging hopelessly along, when a detachment of Bedouin Amalekites, dwellers in the desert, fell upon their rear, " and smote the hindermost of them, even all that were feeble among them," women and children and old men.

It was then at this juncture that action was taken by Moses and Joshua. That action, we see, was twofold. " Moses said unto Joshua, Choose us out men"—a very strict and discriminating choice

would be necessary—"and go out, fight with Amalek"; that was one side of the action; the other side is seen in the words in which Moses continues—"I will stand upon the top of the hill with the rod of God in my hand."

Joshua, sword in hand, fighting in the valley, Moses standing upon the hill-top—these are the two companion pictures that are placed before us. In one picture we see Joshua and the people fighting with varying results, now Israel, now Amalek prevailing; in the other we see Israel's aged leader, accompanied by Aaron and Hur—the priest, and elder of God's people—standing on the hill-top, with the rod of God in his hand, that rod which he had stretched out over "Egypt's dark sea" when its waters were divided.

And so it was that while he held the rod aloft, Israel prevailed; and when through weariness his hand fell to his side, Amalek prevailed.

And then, the time having come for combined action, for united prayer, a stone was placed under him, on which he sat, while Aaron and Hur, one on the one side, and the other on the other side, stayed up his hands, so that his hands remained steady until the going down of the sun; and with this twofold result, that Joshua discomfited Amalek and his people with the sword; and that Moses built an altar, and called the name of it "Jehovah-nissi," "The Lord my banner." Here, then, is pictured to us how the double call—the Call to War and the Call

to Prayer—has come to us in this our land at this stupendous crisis of our national history, and of the history of the world ; the call to the young and strong and unencumbered among us to fight against the common foe ; the call to the rest of us to support with earnest supplication the Great Intercessor and Advocate who ever lives to make intercession for us all alike ; with earnest prayer for the success of the just and righteous cause for which we fight—for so we believe it to be, or to express the same thought in other and more sacred words, with earnest prayer for the hallowing of God's holy Name, for the doing of His holy Will, and for the complete coming of His Kingdom.

This call to combined action and united prayer is addressed to all. Action and Prayer should go hand in hand. To those who are fighting for us across the narrow sea, the main call is to action, but to action combined with prayer ; to those of us who think, and watch, and wait at home, the main call is to prayer, but to prayer combined with action.

But we shall not have gathered the full meaning of this sacred object-lesson unless we carefully note the practical results of this combined action of Joshua on the field of battle and of Moses on the hill-top ; “ Joshua discomfited Amalek and his people,” while “ Moses built an altar, and called the name of it Jehovah-nissi,” that is, “ the Lord our Banner,” or as we may expand it in the words

of Holy Scripture, "The Lord is my Banner, a banner to be displayed because of the truth"—
"His banner over me is love."

Well, indeed, as we think of this significant incident, we may exclaim with Bishop Hall in his "Contemplations," "O, the wondrous power of the prayer of faith!" O God, we cannot but confess our deliverances; but Ah! Where are *our* altars? Where are *our* sacrifices? Where is our Jehovah-nissi? I do not more wonder at Thy power in preserving us, than at Thy mercy which is not weary of casting away favours upon the ungrateful!

Yet at the same time we may thankfully rejoice in the response which the nation as a whole has made to this call to prayer. It may be that it has not always been responded to as fully as it might, yet it has certainly evoked an undoubted national response. Everywhere throughout the country, almost without exception, churches and chapels have been open, and periodical—in many cases daily—services of prayer and intercession have been held. The congregations may not always have been much to boast of as far as mere numbers go; but, take it as a whole, look at it, as we may believe it presents itself to the eyes of the All-merciful; it presents the gracious spectacle of a nation upon its knees, of a nation at prayer.

But while we are thinking of this call to prayer, there are some things about which we ought to make quite sure.

To begin with, let us make quite sure as to whom it is that we presume to address our prayers. Shall we pray to "the God of battles," as some unwisely speak? No, we pray to Him who is not only *our* Father, but the All-Father, "the Father of the spirits of all flesh," "whose mercy is over all His works."

When, then, we pray for the success of our own arms, and for that of our Allies, and when we pray, as our Lord bids us, for our enemies, let us not forget that they also have made their petitions to the same God and Father of all, as we ourselves have done; that they too have joined together in united prayer, seeking God's blessing upon those who have been summoned to the war; no one, at any rate, who has ever been in Bavaria will forget the sight of their churches, thronged from end to end with worshippers, and flowing out into the street, all devoutly intent upon the solemn service within.

And then, again, we need greater expansiveness and enlargement in our prayers; we need a wider outlook, and a more loving and sympathetic spirit; we need to let out our hearts in prayer; we need, like Daniel, to open the windows of our souls towards God's holy hill, the heavenly Zion; we need to look beyond, to "where beyond these voices there is peace."

And now to bring these reflections to a conclusion, let us learn from this early incident in Israel's history how to contend and how to pray; to contend as if everything depended upon our efforts; to pray

as if everything depended, as it most surely does, upon God.

Let those who have responded to their country's call, and gone forth to battle, let them go forth with good hope and good courage ; let them go forth in God's name, and with their country's prayers, ready to give their lives for their country's honour, and for the righteous cause in which they fight.

Let those who are preparing themselves to give efficient help to the wounded, whether on the battlefield, or in hospital, at home or abroad ; let those who are befriending the helpless refugees who have found a shelter among us ; or caring for the wives and families of our soldiers and sailors, go forward to their work with a good courage and a thankful spirit, thankful that they too are permitted to take a part in this supreme national effort to which the war has called them.

And let us all, who in some shape or other are doing service in our country's cause under our great Leader, the true Joshua ; let us at the same time not neglect, with Moses, to build an altar, an altar of oblation, on which to offer our duty and service, an altar of sacrifice to offer the sacrifice—if we are called to make it—of a sorrow-broken heart, together with the solemn remembrance of our loved ones, who in this world we shall never see again, and whose loved remains will lie on foreign soil ; an altar on which to offer the sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving for God's abounding mercies ; an altar

on which to offer a peace-offering, laying upon it our humble prayer for "the Blessing of Peace."

And to this Altar we cannot do better than give the name which Moses chose for the altar which he built: Jehovah-nissi—The Lord be our banner, the banner under which we fight, the banner under which we pray!

VI

THE SHADOW OF A GREAT ROCK IN A WEARY LAND

THROUGHOUT the prophecies of Isaiah, the glorious future of Israel is associated with a king, and not only with a king, but with a kingdom ; it rests upon a reign of righteousness, justice and truth, a kingdom over which a king should reign in righteousness, and princes rule in judgment.

It is on the stage of this reign of righteousness, with this background of judgment and justice, that there stands out the figure of a *man*, a man of whom things are spoken that had never been spoken of a man before :—" A man shall be as a hiding-place from the wind, and a covert from the tempest, as rivers of water in a dry place, as the shadow of a great rock in a weary land."

And all this spoken of a *man*, and that, although the very same things are spoken of God—" For," says the same prophet—" thou, O Lord, hast been a strength to the poor, a strength to the needy in his distress, a refuge from the storm, a shadow from the heat."

This contradiction can only be explained in the

light of the Incarnation. It is in the Child born, in the Son given, in Him who, while truly man, was truly God, Emmanuel, God with us, that we find the only shelter from the storm, the only shadow from the heat, the shadow of a great rock in a weary land.

This most comforting truth has sunk deep into Christian hearts, and has been realised in thousands of Christian lives ; untold myriads of pilgrims passing through the wilderness of life have found in the Son of Man rest and shelter and refreshment, a shelter from the storm, a shadow from the heat.

Do not these familiar, much-loved words bring to us a welcome relief from the anxious strain of the last two months ? Do they not, as we hear or read them to-day, strike a fresh chord of faith and hope in our hearts ? Do they not now speak to us with a fuller meaning, do they not appeal to us with an added force ?

We have all of us been passing through a time of terrible anxiety, some of us perhaps through a time of agonising suspense, suspense to which even the tidings of their loved ones' death on the battle-field may have brought relief, a relief tempered with sorrow, but cheered with hope. The keenness of such a loss may, it may be hoped, be deadened by the healing hand of time, the poignancy of such a grief may be mitigated by Divine consolation ; but what will remain as an abiding possession will be the remembrance never to be effaced, that their loved ones shed their blood in a righteous cause,

the sacred cause of liberty, and died for their king and country.

But even if we ourselves have been spared this suspense and loss, our hearts have been pierced, our imagination wearied in the effort to realise the terrible scenes of which we read day by day, scenes of frightful carnage, the persistent boom of artillery, the nerve-shaking shriek of falling shells; to say nothing of desolated homes, and desecrated shrines,—is it not a relief to have our thoughts turned from these scenes of war, of loss, and pain and death, and to fix them upon Him, the Divine Son of Man, the Man of Sorrows, who has proved to others in the past, and will prove to us now as the Shadow of a great rock in a weary land?

We should try to realise the deep significance of the statement that He who is a hiding-place from the wind, a covert from the tempest, a shadow from the heat is a *Man*.

Does it not give us the fullest assurance that we may find in Him not only Divine Consolation, but human sympathy; that He with whom we have to do is One who can be touched with the feeling of our infirmities, whose most characteristic utterance, perhaps, was—"Come unto Me all ye that are weary and heavy-laden, and I will give you rest"?

But this prophetic announcement is not only a revelation of the Son of Man, the Man of Sorrows, but is a revelation also of the true ideal for humanity

in the members no less than in the Head, and a call to us all to realise and fulfil that ideal in our own lives.

For it is our calling, our highest dignity, and will be our truest happiness, to be to wounded spirits a hiding-place from the wind, to be to storm-tossed souls a haven of refuge, to be to the weary and heavy-laden, to the downcast and the sad as rivers of water in a dry place, to be to the heartbroken and downtrodden as the Shadow of a great rock in a weary land.

To this calling numbers among our people have fully responded, to this ideal thousands of men and women have sought to conform their lives in works of practical beneficence and active charity.

But there is more in this prophetic utterance than meets the eye, more than at first the mind is able to take in.

We know little or nothing of the conditions of desert life, or of the struggle of human husbandry with the sand-drifts on the desert's edge ; but we can easily imagine that when the wind blows steadily from the desert, the sand begins to drift, and encroach upon the cultivated ground, so that whatever vegetation had begun to show itself soon becomes choked and buried by the advancing sand-drift.

But if there should be a rock or boulder rising above the sand, the case is altogether different. The rock arrests the drift, the sand ripple breaks in vain against it. And then let but a few showers

fall, and the blades of corn will spring up, and shoots of various plants will raise their heads, and after a while what would soon have become a desert, becomes more or less a watered garden.

And so it comes about that Christ our Lord in the desert of human life, acts by His very presence as a barrier against human sin, human error and human ambition.

Now, may we not apply this to the sand-drift of war and its far-reaching effects?

It is true, that the desolation caused by war is not the result of a gradual process. It rather bursts upon the nations as a bolt from the blue, or like a sudden sand-storm in the desert.

But whether or no, it is to the Shadow of a great rock, the rest and refreshment which Christ *the* Man, the true Head of Humanity gives, to the vivifying influence, the fostering care which He, and through Him, His servants, bring to bear upon the desolation of war, and the other ills which desolate human life, that we must look!

There in the wilderness of human life, in the devastation of war, stands out the great rock of Christ and His people, of Christ and His Church, under whose healing fostering shadow the work of restoration can begin.

The timbers of the ruined homestead, blackened by fire, or reduced to ashes, will, we may confidently hope, in course of time, with timely human help, and the Divine blessing, be replaced; the roof shattered into shapeless fragments which strew its

floors in hopeless confusion will again cover the rebuilt and renovated home. The trodden-down garden will again be alive with growing plants, and gay with flowers. The fields—in too many cases enriched with the blood of its assailants and its defenders—will once more receive the precious seed and once again smile in the joy of harvest. The vines swept away by shells or trodden down by horse-hoofs, will be replaced, and after a long, perhaps a very long waiting, may once more be laden with purple clusters.

But this perhaps is looking too far ahead, and we must come back to the sheltering rock which resists the sand-drift of the desert.

Another such deadly sand-drift which chokes up and smothers the healthy development of human life, whether that of nations or individuals, is the sand-drift of a godless materialism.

This hateful principle not only finds its expression in the saying—"There is no other life but this, therefore let us make the best of it, let us eat and drink for to-morrow we die"; it is seen also, we have had it exhibited to us in the detestable doctrine, that nothing is too sacred to be trodden under foot, if it stands in the way of reckless ambition, or lust of power; that might is the only right, that brute force is the only thing to be depended upon, that all else is so much sentimental rubbish, that treaties are so many bits of paper, to be torn up at will, things to which no one but an imbecile would give a second thought.

Against this sand-drift of materialism, Christ, the true Rock in the desert, the true Man, the perfect Ideal of Humanity, set Himself as a bulwark of resistance. His life refuted it, His death condemned it.

He emptied Himself of His glory, He voluntarily embraced a life of toil, of hardship, and poverty, He endured the Cross, despising the shame. To Him there was only one sort of life worth living, and that was a life lived in the service of men, and to the glory of God.

It is such an ideal of life as this that our Lord sets before us, it is to such a life as this that His blessed example points us.

But this prophecy, as it has been already suggested, does not belong only to Christ, it belongs also to His servants. It belongs to *the* Man, the perfect Man, because it belongs to man, to any man. Any man who can rise to the dignity of his manhood, to the dignity of the *Christ* within him, can be in a measure to his brethren shelter and refreshment and welcome shadow.

Each one of us, within the limits even of his own narrow sphere: each one of us, however imperfect his character, if only we be simple and faithful followers of Christ, may in some measure, and to some extent, be a rock of shelter to the weak, the tempted, and the sorrowful. How many a poor soul, alas, has gone under in the struggle with evil for want of such a shelter !

How many a tempted soul has succumbed to temptation, because he has seen no instances around him of successful resistance !

All around him there is nothing but a dull monotony of temptation victorious, of sin triumphant, hope is crushed and buried, he has no longer got the heart to strive !

But let some one person, some strong man, some sympathising woman, arise out of the desert of his own surroundings, in his own village, in his own street, and live the higher life, and show it to be possible to resist the drift of sin ; and the tempted soul will take courage, and under the shadow of this sheltering rock in the desert, put forth the struggling shoots of a quickened life.

If a good man does no more by his good life than to make faith in goodness easier to other men ; if a good woman does nothing else, in the midst of temptation and vice, than to make purity and kindness beautiful and attractive to others, they have not lived in vain.

What more blessed reward can any Christian man or woman receive, than to be permitted to perform for their brethren such offices as these ! How great the privilege to be to any in this sad world as the shadow of a rock, however small, in a weary land !

Here, then, is a call addressed to all Christian hearts ; here is a sphere of service for all Christian people.

If we cannot be, or think we cannot be, as a lighthouse to guide weather-beaten mariners into the safe harbour of the living Church of Christ ; if we cannot, or think we cannot, act as a lifeboat to rescue the perishing and tempest-tossed ; at any rate we can act as a rock, even though a little one, to give shade and shelter to the weary and the sad !

We have only to live our life, a simple Christian life of faith and love and hope in the power of the Spirit of Christ, and in some small measure we shall not fail to be to those around us " a hiding-place from the wind and a covert from the tempest, as rivers of water in a dry place, as the shadow of a great rock in a weary land."

VII

THE CHRISTIAN COMBAT AND THE STRATEGY OF WAR

ONE of the most important religious aspects of the War which demands our serious attention at the present time, and one which ought not to be omitted even from such a cursory survey of the situation as is here attempted, is certainly the sobering thought that it is only too possible for our minds to become so filled with the War, with its harrowing scenes, and its thrilling episodes, as to make us forget that we have each one of us his own spiritual combat to fight, his own spiritual warfare to wage, his own special fort to hold.

In fact, we may need to acknowledge with one of the speakers in the Book of Canticles, "They made me keeper of the vineyards, but my own vineyard have I not kept"; or, as we may venture to paraphrase it to suit our own circumstances: "I have been occupied with the moving scenes of this colossal warfare, but my own spiritual battle I have not fought, the vineyard of my own spiritual life I have not cultivated."

So now, turning our thoughts from these scenes

of war to the cultivation of our own spiritual life, to our own spiritual warfare, the thought rises in our minds, that it might be wise for us to adopt some of the principles and methods of earthly warfare, and adapt them to the conditions of our spiritual conflict. One of the most striking characteristics of the present war is the vast area that its operations cover, an area stretching from the English Channel to the Carpathian Mountains. This is accompanied by the use of the most deadly instruments of destruction. The inhabitants of peaceful cities far away from the line of battle are exposed to the attacks of airships dropping deadly explosives from the skies on their streets and buildings, so that even the shrine of Notre Dame in Paris has not been spared. Our sailors are exposed to attack not only on the surface of the sea upon which their vessels float, but to the insidious approach of invisible enemies under the very waters of the deep.

Do not these conditions of earthly warfare correspond in a very striking way to the similar conditions of our spiritual combat? Do they not afford a vivid commentary on the words of St. Paul: "We wrestle not with flesh and blood"—with enemies of our own kind—"but against principalities, against powers, against the spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places;" and upon the summons which he addresses to the Christian soldier, faced as he is by such enemies as these: "Wherefore take up, and put on the whole armour of God."

Then, again, as to the methods of spiritual warfare which may be borrowed from the war tactics that have been most employed. There is Nelson's plan—to get to close grips with the enemy, board his ship, and fight hand to hand on his deck; or Napoleon's method, to show yourself the strongest on your weakest side; to concentrate your forces upon one point, rather than dissipate them over many. This is very much the plan, it would seem, which the writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews recommended, when he says: "Let us lay aside every weight, and the sin that doth so easily beset us."

Instead of making a vain attempt to resist all the temptations to which we are exposed at one and the same time, he would urge us to concentrate our efforts upon one at a time, taking first the strongest, and the one hardest to resist, the temptation, in fact, to our besetting sin. In striving to correct and amend your faults, he would say, take them one at a time, and when by God's grace you have overcome the first, exert all your energies to overcome the next; and in doing so you may take comfort from the fact that the fiercest fight will be fought in the attack upon the enemy's strongest position, and that all subsequent battles will, as a rule, prove easier.

Another maxim of modern warfare that may help us in our own spiritual combat, is that the best method of defence is often to take the offensive, and, where possible, to carry the war into the enemy's country.

This form of spiritual strategy is much on the same lines as those upon which St. Paul based his advice: "Be not overcome with evil, but overcome evil with good."

If we are troubled, as many a Christian has been, with evil thoughts, the fumes of former sinful indulgence, perhaps, rising in our minds, instead of dwelling upon them as we necessarily do when we *consciously* resist them, we should do better to adopt the positive method, and overcome evil with good, overcome evil thoughts by filling our minds with good and beautiful thoughts. The same mind cannot habitually contain both, cannot at least welcome both. The evil thought may, indeed, force its way up, but if it is at once crushed down, its place can be filled with what is good, and true, and pure. This was what St. Paul meant when he addressed to the Philippian Christians such words as these: "Whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are venerable, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report think, think on these things," or, as good Bishop Andrewes shows us how to turn it into a prayer, "That we may think of these things and do them, grant us, O Lord."

Or if we feel the love of money creeping over us, and we know only too well how desperately hard this root of evil is to combat, instead of dwelling upon it, and thinking how we can best succeed in overcoming it, we had better at once overcome the

evil with positive good, by carrying the war into the country of Mammon and forcing ourselves to give largely to some charitable cause.

So again with the temptation, a very hard one to resist, to harbour unkind thoughts, to foster an unjust dislike, to cherish some old grudge, may be best met and overcome by forcing ourselves to speak a kind word, or do a kindly action to the person against whom the grudge exists.

To these considerations may be added the necessity, so constantly forced upon our attention in the time of war, the absolute need of spiritual training, practice and discipline. A military unit, if it is to be what it ought to be, must be a body of trained, practised, and disciplined soldiers.

The importance of self-control, which is the result of discipline, is apparent on all sides. It is this which will guard us, as we are now being taught to pray that we may be guarded, against arrogance on the one hand, and feebleness on the other. It is this that will endue us with courage and endurance, with tranquillity and self-control; it is this which will inspire us with moderation in victory and patience in reverses.

We are all more or less inclined to think that prayer and other religious exercises are easy things, that we need no particular training, no special discipline to prepare us for them. But if we do thus think, we are making a very great mistake.

Unless we are accustomed by special training to

use the various parts of the Christian armour, we shall find that, when the attack begins, we have not the skill to use them, and that it may be with us as it was with David when he refused the armour in which Saul wished to array him, with the words : " I cannot go with these, for I have not proved them."

Again in the conduct of war, as we watch its progress, we cannot but feel that there is something more to be recognised than strategy and tactics, something more than training and discipline, something more than the soldier's special duty of obedience, there is in it something spiritual, something that is, if not supernatural, is yet at least super-physical.

Success in war is not attained merely by physical strength, or capacity for endurance. It is only to a limited extent that victory inclines, as it has been cynically said, to the largest battalions. We speak of *élan*, and dash, and even of the fierce joy of battle, but what are these but the outcome and exercise of a super-physical force ?

Tennyson touched upon this spiritual element in the hero's warfare when he introduces Sir Galahad as saying :

" My strength is as the strength of ten,
Because my heart is pure ! "

Another spiritual or physical element in earthly warfare is that of solidarity. No man fights alone, even though he may be separated from his comrades he is fighting not for himself, but for his

company, for his regiment, his battery. If he stands his ground he knows that by doing so he will strengthen and encourage his fellows; if he should flinch, he knows that it would affect the steadiness of the whole line.

And is it not so with our spiritual warfare? We do not fight alone any more than we pray alone, and worship alone.

We fight our battle not only as separate units, but as soldiers in the army of our King. And because this is so, when in our spiritual conflict the enemy approaches us, and we are hard pressed, and the helmet of hope is battered in, and the shield of faith pierced, and the sword of the Spirit fails in our weary hands, it will be a source of strength and comfort to know that some brother soul is fighting a like battle, and is as hard pressed as we, that he, as we have done, has lifted up an unspoken prayer to the Great Captain, and has been heard and helped, as we too may pray, and we too be heard and helped.

And not that only, but we may believe also that our resistance may nerve some unknown brother's arm, and our victory cheer his heart, for this is the working out of the law of solidarity, as it is expressed in the profound utterance of St. Paul: "No man liveth unto himself, and no man dieth unto himself."

Another spiritual element in warfare, as we have seen it exemplified in the bearing of our own soldiers at the front, and one which has greatly impressed our Allies, is the abundant evidence that they

have given of their possession of irrepressible hopefulness, cheerfulness, joyfulness, even gaiety of spirit.

Probably there are many who will feel conscious of the absence, or at least of the deficiency, in these virtues as characterising their lives; most of us must confess that we do not put enough of this most cheering optimism into our spiritual warfare; that we are too often downcast, too seldom joyful, more inclined to sink down into mere acquiescence and submission, than to rise to cheerfulness of spirit, and gladness of heart.

We all need the constantly repeated admonition of St. Francis to the brethren of his Order, not to show sorrowful faces to one another, saying to one of them, as related by Brother Leo: "Let this sadness remain between God and thyself, and pray to Him that of His mercy He may forgive thee, and restore to thy soul His healthy joyance whereof He deprived thee as a punishment for thy sins."

We need still more the spirit of St. Francis, of whom it has been said: "Nature was his companion, his breviary, the mirror wherein he saw reflected the face of the Creator. He walked the earth with joyous steps, inviting all to come with him and see how beautiful was the world; he looked upwards, praising God in bursts of eloquent song for the rain that fed the flowers, for the birds who sang to him in the woods, and for the blueness of his Umbrian sky."

But perhaps the most striking and significant spiritual element embodied in the warfare that our troops are now waging, is the proud and exultant loyalty displayed by our soldiers and sailors to their King and country.

Those who were fortunate enough to witness the disembarkation of our Indian troops at Marseilles, tell us of the exuberant, passionate loyalty which they displayed, and the boundless enthusiasm with which they were welcomed.

It had been thought by some that the King's dominions over the seas were losing something of their attachment to the Old Country, that Canada was slowly gravitating to the United States, and that the Australian dominions thought more of independence than of loyalty.

But how completely have these suggestions been refuted, and these fears dispelled, by the noble and fearless loyalty that they have displayed, a loyalty which has deeply touched our own hearts, and excited the wondering admiration of other nations.

Does not this inspiring principle of devoted loyalty suggest that in the spiritual combat which each Christian soldier is called to fight, the most deep-reaching, the most inspiring, the most fruitful element is that of the personal loyalty of the Christian warrior to his King and Captain, his personal devotion to his Saviour and his Lord?

We may conclude this section of our subject, and

"Who is the happy Warrior? Who is he
That every man in arms should wish to be?
. . . 'Tis he whose powers shed round him . . .
A constant influence, a peculiar grace,
But who, if he be called upon to face
Some awful moment, to which Heaven has joined
Great issues, good or bad for human kind,
 . . . is attired
With sudden brightness, like a man inspired;
And, through the heat of conflict, keeps the law
In calmness made, and sees what he foresaw . . .
Who looks forward, persevering to the last,
From well to better, daily self-surpass: . . .
This is the happy Warrior; this is he
Whom every man in arms should wish to be."

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